1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

425 donor had not kept his old teeth as they fell out no attempt was made to find a substitute[1].

425 428 It was said that sometimes the donor would add his flint and steel to the stone and tooth; we believe, though we are not certain, that this was only done when land was passed as the result of a death, in which case a lock of hair from the head of the dying man was added to the other objects and became a most important part of the "seisin." The lock of hair would only be cut from the head of the sick or dying man at his own request by the man to whom his land would pass, who would cut the lock with an arrow. It was necessary that the sick man should be conscious and that he should himself give the lock to his heir, to whom he might say, "If there is any dispute after my death show this to whoever gives you trouble." Plate XXIII represents the "seisin" of certain land at Damenegama given by the last Vedda of the group to whom the land in question belonged, to the father of Tissahami the Vedda Arachi referred to on p. 41. The "seisin" here shown consists of a lock of hair, a tooth, a metal strike-a-light and a piece of milky quartz. All these objects were sent for our inspection in an old Kandyan embroidered betel bag in which it was said they were always kept, but we had no opportunity of discussing their significance with the Arachi and thus cannot say whether the quartz stone belongs to the strike-a-light or is an essential part of the "seisin." It was explained that a Vedda would not give land to a Sinhalese under ordinary circumstances, but only when a Vedda is the last of his folk and knows not where to turn for food and shelter. The father of the Arachi only obtained the Damenegama land because the last of the local Veddas was a very old man, so forlorn and feeble that he could no longer provide for himself and his wife. He accordingly made over his land to the father of the Arachi, in return for food and shelter for the rest of his and his wife's days. Probably the fact that the man who took over the land had Vedda blood in his veins and had always associated with the Veddas made the transaction easier.

[1] Teeth are generally kept. Some of the older Veddas were literally very "long in the tooth", as the gums recede in old age the teeth loosen and fall out (*pyorrhœa alveolaris*).

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

425
428
312

Plate XXIII

Seisin consisting of hair, tooth, quartz fragment, and strike-a-light

[facing p. 114]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

The near relations, including sons-in-law of the dying man, would come to him when death was expected, and it was a matter of duty for the sons or other near relatives to send information of a man's dangerous illness to his sons-in-law, and the latter would be justly angry if this information were withheld from them. We were never able to determine whether a son-in-law actually benefited by being present at his father-in-law's death, we believe that his presence was only an act of pious duty, and that he derived no increased right to the dead man's property by this. Certainly the land which came to a man at his marriage from his father-in-law would not be given to anyone else by the latter on his deathbed; we have, however, some reason to think that the unmarried sons of a man's sisters might, as the result of their attendance at their potential father-in-law's death-bed, be given land which otherwise would not have come to them until their marriage, or perhaps not at all. Handuna of Sitala Wanniya thought that a sick man might sometimes give his son-in-law a lock of his hair, but unfortunately it was not possible to discover under what circumstances, if any, this occurred. That land was commonly given to sons and not to sons-in-law by a dying man was clear from the very explicit statement made by Handuna, "My sons will naturally take my stones as evidence of their right to possess my land." With regard to the division of land between a man's children, it was pointed out that most people made their wishes on this point clear during their lifetime and it must always be remembered that no landed property passed without the consent of the grown men of the group.

It seemed that the borders of each group's territory were so well known to all the members that quarrels concerning land were very rare, trespassing upon another man's domain was almost unknown, though when it did occur it was strongly resented. Knox's account of something very like a pitched battle between two parties of Veddas which has already been quoted on p. 7 shows this, and we were everywhere told that until a few years ago a man trespassing on the territory of others might have been shot without fear of this provoking reprisals.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

of Sitala Wanniya had three dogs, an axe, bow and arrow, one pot, betel bag, betel cutters, "flint and steel" and gourd for carrying tinder.

It seemed that adult sons inherited most of their fathers' personal property, but certainly the sons-in-law had the right to receive something. We have no doubt that what actually occurs, or until recently occurred, is that the adult children and the sons-in-law talked over and decided who should have each article of property, the whole being fairly shared; or if the sons-in-law were well provided with goods the whole of the dead man's property might go to his sons; thus Poromala (Walaha) told us that when his father died, leaving an axe, a bow and arrows, a deerskin, "flint and steel" and a betel bag with accessories, he took the axe and bow and arrows, leaving the other articles to his brother Handuna. Poromala added that as elder brother the division of the property was his affair. When Poromala dies his property will be divided among his children, and it appeared that his eldest child, his daughter Tuti and her husband, would take the leading part in the distribution of his personal property. Handuna of Sitala Wanniya says that his property will be divided as follows; he has three dogs, each of his two sons and his *basna* will take one of these; his axe and bow and arrows will be divided between his sons; his son-in-law will take his strike-a-light and his wife his betel bag and its appurtenances and probably his pots. Handuna added that his landed property would naturally go to his sons, but pointed out that his *basna* had a right to demand any personal property he cared to have, though no *basna* would behave unfairly or badly to his father-in-law's sons.

At Godatalawa, where Handuna the "senior" of the group had no adult sons, it was said that his dog, axe and bow and arrows would be divided between his sons-in-law; his betel bag and his deerskin would go to his son, a boy of eight or ten, who would also take his rice mortar and divide his father's pots with his *basna*. From these examples, it will be clear that a man's personal property is fairly equally divided between his children, the daughters' shares being often nominally given to their husbands.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

slipping. Such ceremonial arrows are generally heirlooms, not necessarily passing from father to son but rather being handed down in apostolic succession from shaman to shaman, and among the village Veddas of Bintenne I have handled one such blade with a history running back for five generations.

Figure 8 shows two ceremonial arrows which we were able to collect. Besides these we saw similar *aude* at Omuni and were told at Sitala Wanniya that Handuna had formerly possessed one. Rutimeyer has figured one of these ceremonial arrows about 14 inches long, obtained from Kaira the "senior" of the Danigala Veddas. These arrows are carefully preserved by the shaman, and just as he himself observes certain dietetic rules, avoiding eating pig and fowl which are supposed to be particularly repulsive to the *yaku*, so among those more sophisticated communities who believe in the periodical uncleanliness of women, special precautions are taken to avoid the possible contamination of the *aude*[1]. This is generally done by keeping them in some comparatively remote spot such as a cave or in the roof thatch. It is necessary that the shaman should hold one of these arrows in his hand when invoking Kande Yaka; he should also have one for Bilindi Yaka, though as a matter of practice Kande Yaka and Bilindi Yaka were often invoked using the same *aude*, another *aude* being reserved for invoking the *Nae Yaku*. Both arrows were, however, commonly held in the hands during the whole of the *Nae Yaku* ceremony, but in spite of this no confusion seemed to arise nor had the onlookers the least difficulty in saying which *aude* belonged to Kande Yaka whenever they were asked.

The offering of rice in the pot would be stirred with the *aude*, and betel leaves might be ceremonially transfixed with it. Among the Veddas of Unuwatura Bubula the testing of the quality of the food provided for the *yaku* was performed with the help of the *aude*, the shaman possessed by Kande Yaka using the *aude* to remove from the pot a few grains of rice which the *yaku* in the person of the shaman several times examined before expressing his approval of the offering provided.

[1] The belief in the periodical uncleanliness of women has been borrowed from the Sinhalese. It did not exist in the "wildest" group we met with, on the other hand we found it among all the more sophisticated Veddas, attaining a maximum where these had come under foreign influence.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

ignorant—the evidence for the use of jewellery or personal ornaments worn for their own sake is limited to the former wearing of ear ornaments by the Vedda women. Bailey states that the women "have their ears pierced and wear in the lobes round studs of ivory[1]," and this was confirmed by our old Sinhalese informant, whose evidence as to the former condition of the Veddas has been given in Chapter II. It seems that men did not wear ear ornaments, although we met some village Veddas (Dambani) who wore earrings, and a few men in other communities were seen with pierced ears. This point of view is confirmed by Nevill who wrote, "Men occasionally wore a few large beads on their waist string, if they could afford it, but no other jewels," and he describes the women's ear ornaments as "ear-jewels, the size of a man's thumb made of ivory, white horn, or bone, and carved or etched...worn through the lobe of the ear[2]."

At the present time among the wilder Veddas neither men nor women wear beads or ornaments of any kind, though the women are pleased to accept beads as presents.

It is otherwise among the more sophisticated Veddas of the Bintenne. At Omuni all the women and girls wore beads, and though they could not account for their origin, we were able to ascertain that they had been in their possession at least five generations. They descended usually from grandmother to granddaughter, some strings being given to each girl-child at birth, the rest being usually given when the girl married, or on the death of the grandmother. These beads are of glass, mostly red though some are green and a few white. They have been identified by Mr C. H. Read as 17th century Venetian beads, and were doubtless a present from some notable who required assistance from the Veddas as he passed through their country.

This summarises all we have been able to learn concerning the use of personal ornaments among the Veddas, and though Nevill states, presumably of the Veddas of the Bintenne, that they "delight to deck their hair with bright or fragrant flowers," we were unable to find any trace of this practice occurring

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 184. [2] *Op. cit.* p. 190.

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

Equally they were acquainted with tobacco and betel, for I was shown a place where the Veddas established a toll that was paid usually in these particular commodities. 276 [651]

The dog was the only domestic animal reared by the Vedda, and special names were given to these pets. 231 552

The Veddas appeared to have no knowledge of melting iron for the manufacture of their particular implements, which consisted of the bow and arrow, the spear, and the small axe, or hatchet. Arrow and spear-heads were procured by barter; the method of procedure was to clear a small space round the foot of a tree by the wayside leading to a village known to contain smiths. Here the Vedda would hang up to the branch of a tree a vessel containing honey, or a piece of meat, which would be taken by the smith, who in return would hang up an arrow-head. 411 412 326 439

It was understood by both that the quantity or number of articles required would be represented by the number of parcels of meat or honey. Should the smith, however, take the meat and not leave the arrow-heads that were thus silently requisitioned, he would pay the penalty with his life, or some of his animals would be shot by the defrauded Vedda. [628]

The bow was usually made from the wood of the Dunumadala (*Stereospermum chelonioides*) and of the Bignoniaceæ. It was not always of the same length, as this appears to have depended on the springiness of the wood. The arrow was generally about 4 ft. long, or as much as a man could draw the bow to. The arrow-head appears to have been small, large arrow-heads being for ceremonial purposes only. 411 [824]

Fire was obtained by spinning, under moderate pressure, a vertical rod of Welanga wood (*Pterospermum suberifolium*) on a flat piece of wood of the same species, with the point of the former surrounded by floss, or some quickly inflammable material. Later, the flint and steel were found more effective. One example of a flint and steel was shown to me at Panawa, and I tried to purchase it at the owner's valuation, but I found he was most reluctant to sell. I understood that the flint and steel, a lock of hair, and a fragment of cloth represented a title deed, these being given by a dying man to his heir, or adopted heir, as a mode or evidence of transfer. 372 [824] 423 428

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

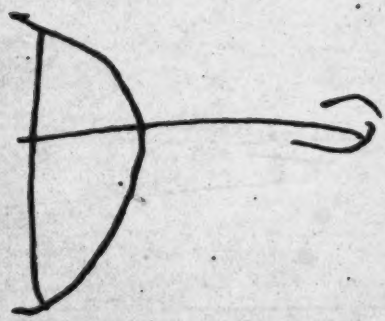
4. VEDDA JUNGLES

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them

ISAIAH.

THE forests we were now in were the immemorial haunts of the Veddas of Bingoda, Galmede and Sittala Wanniya. They stretched from Bingoda to Newaragala, and included such famous Vedda hills as Walimbe (Friar's Hood) and Bandaradua. The Magalavatan Aar cleaves this country on its way to Unichi tank. The jungle is virginal, but one is surprised to find here an occasional guava bearing luscious fruit, and much wild cinnamon. *Palu* and *veera*, so abundant in the more southern forests, is wanting here.

Nowhere is the Vedda more at home than in this wilderness, intersected by game trails only known to him and wild animals, and studded with the rocks that hold his caves. This land is all their wealth. By old Vedda law it is divided into *panguas* or shares, marked off by such natural landmarks as streams, rocks, or conspicuous trees scored with the *dhunu hena* (bow mark) distorted beyond recognition with age. The *panguas* of the Bingoda Veddas are six:—(1) Madana-gama: (2) Marana-pangua: (3) Kumburu-wella-gama (kuda and maha): (4) Bingoda: (5) Kakalana-bokke: (6) Bandaradua. Of these, the first three are included under the name Galmede and are now the property of Suthu Banda; the last three are Kaurala's. Each of these divisions, in days of greater prosperity, had its own chieftain.



Dhunu-hena or bow mark drawn by Vedda

It is to the credit of these Veddas that they alone of all the Veddas in Ceylon can still name their shares, indicate their boundaries, and observe the traditional law of non-transgression, hunting only in their allotted spheres. Suthu Banda, for instance, would not take the swiftlets' nests on Walimbe because they were Kaurala's by right; nor would he break the hives beyond Newaragala because those lands, once Vedda, have now lapsed to the Sinhalese.

Land goes to the eldest child whether son or daughter; failing them to the nephew. In the old days the proofs of inheritance were a white stone (*kirivanagala*) and molar tooth, bound together with a wisp of human hair; later the *ola* supplanted it; and still later a paper document issued by Government, and so carefully hidden away that it was invariably eaten by termites! These people, it would appear, were wiser than Government in their choice of a seizin.

[p. 79]